

DFEH News Brief

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NEW STATE HATE VIOLENCE GUIDE OUTLINES REMEDIES FOR VICTIMS, COMMUNITY-BASED RESOURCES AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Sacramento – The Davis Administration today announced the release of a new publication available to organizations that assist victims of hate violence. Titled *“Responding to Hate: Rights, Remedies, Prevention Strategies,”* the guide outlines the Department of Fair Employment and Housing’s (DFEH) role in enforcing California’s *Ralph Civil Rights Act*, which prohibits acts of hate violence, and provides strategies for community networking to prevent hate violence.

“This Administration will not turn a blind eye to hate violence whenever and wherever it is found,” said DFEH Director Dennis Hayashi. “When necessary, we will prosecute these cases to the fullest. However, we know that the best way to combat hate violence is to prevent it from occurring in the first place. This guide will assist those organizations and communities that have made eradicating hate violence a priority.

“The publication brings together important information and resources for three key purposes. First, to emphasize the role of the Department of Fair Employment and Housing in enforcing California laws prohibiting hate violence; second, to serve as a reference guide for organizations that provide direct assistance to victims of hate violence; and third, to help communities organize and find solutions for preventing hate violence that meet their particular needs.”

The publication’s release follows an October 2001 Davis Administration initiative to assist victims in the wave of hate violence that followed the September 11th terrorist attacks. The DFEH spent the next year meeting with community organizations, religious leaders, and human rights commissions around the state and providing training to attorneys on California hate violence laws. The initiative included a toll-free, statewide hotline for victims that yielded more than two hundred calls from individuals seeking information or wishing to file discrimination complaints. In addition, Governor Davis also signed legislation effective January 1, 2003, which extended the timeframe for filing complaints in cases where the perpetrator is initially unknown to the victim.

The *Ralph Act* forbids violence or threats of violence because of a person’s race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, political affiliation or position in a labor dispute. Prohibited acts include verbal or written threats, physical assault or attempted assault, graffiti, vandalism or property damage. Remedies available to victims include restraining orders, damages for the cost of medical treatment, lost wages, property repair, and emotional distress and suffering, civil penalties, attorney fees, and punitive damages against the perpetrator.

Copies of the booklet may be downloaded from the Department’s website at www.dfeh.ca.gov. Further information about DFEH and its services may be obtained by calling (800) 884-1684.

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